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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Fitzgerald is damaged during loading process

By TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The crippled USS Fitzgerald was forced to return to its homeport Monday after suffering further damage while being loaded onto a heavy lift vessel for its trip stateside.

The guided-missile destroyer was sent back to repair two new punctures in the ship's hull, the Navy announced Monday afternoon. The punctures were caused by the heavy lift vessel MV Transshelf's steel support structure while the Fitzgerald was being loaded. The Navy estimates the repairs will take several days, after which the Fitzgerald will resume its journey to Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Miss., for fixes and upgrades.

The warship was towed into deep waters early Friday so it could link up with the Transshelf for the multiday loading process.

A deadly collision on June 17 between the Fitzgerald and a Philippine-flagged merchant ship killed seven sailors and injured three others. The Navy relieved the ship's two senior officers and a senior enlisted sailor. Several officer and enlisted watch standers were also held accountable for the accident.

Only about 50 sailors from the Fitzgerald's crew of about 300 will remain aboard the ship as it travels back to the U.S., 7th Fleet spokesman Cmdr. Clay Doss previously told Stars and Stripes.

"The majority of [Fitzgerald] sailors — but not all — will have opportunities to serve other commands in Japan based on available billets, individual crew desires and the needs of the Navy," he said. "Some sailors do not desire reassignment in [Japan] and have asked for orders to other locations."

Huntington Ingalls Industries was chosen to repair the Fitzgerald because the company would be able to restore the ship in the shortest amount of time, Naval Sea Systems Command said in August. The project's start date, scope, cost and timeline are still to be determined, it added.

The Navy decided to take the Fitzgerald to the U.S. to free up space at Yokosuka for other 7th Fleet ships needing maintenance, Doss said in a previous statement.

UN officer calls to N. Korea via bullhorn over violations

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

PANMUNJOM, South Korea — A United Nations Command officer used a bullhorn to broadcast a message about armistice violations across the Demilitarized Zone to North Korea, but as of Monday the communist state has not responded to a request for a meeting to discuss the allegations.

The UNC, which oversees the jointly patrolled area in the Demilitarized Zone that divides the peninsula, announced on Nov. 22 that an investigation found the North Koreans had violated the truce that ended the 1950-53 war by firing across the border and in one case briefly crossing it in pursuit of a soldier who was defecting.

It also released a dramatic video last week that shows a military jeep racing along a road until it got stuck in a ditch, prompting the fleeing soldier to jump out and run to the South while his former comrades shot at him with automatic rifles and handguns.

The defection occurred as tensions are already sky high over the North's nuclear weapons program following a series of missile launches and its sixth and most powerful nuclear test on Sept. 3.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Daniel McShane, of the UNC Military Armistice Commission, said he and a Korean translator relayed the findings and a request for a meeting six times in English and Korean to North Korean guards on the other side of the Military Demarcation Line.

"We did it through the bullhorn in the rain," he told Stars and Stripes, adding there has been no response. "To my knowledge they haven't acknowledged this event at all other than the initial firing."

McShane and the translator initially read it to the North Korean soldiers three times, then went inside. But the North Koreans signaled with a flashlight that they wanted a repeat for video, so the duo went outside again and repeated the message three more times, he said.

"We were about 30 feet from the MDL and they came up to 10 feet," he said, adding that's the usual mode of communicating with the North Koreans since the communist state suspended use of a hotline.

"We have a phone in our office, but they're not answering," he said.

The rare glimpse of communications in the Joint Security Area, the only part of the DMZ where the two sides come face to face, came as South Korea's defense minister warned the North not to repeat the violations during a tour on Monday of the bullet-riddled scene of the Nov. 13 border dash.

North Korean soldiers stood guard on the other side, watching and filming every move.

The 24-year-old defector, who has been identified only by his last name of Oh, was hit at least five times and remains hospitalized. Doctors say his condition has stabilized.

The North Koreans, meanwhile, have dug a trench in an apparent bid to prevent further escapes, and the regime reportedly has replaced all of its soldiers in the jointly patrolled area.

Evidence of the shooting, which was the first in the Joint Security Area since 1984, was everywhere. Turned-up earth was still fresh on the trench, which McShane said is about 4½ feet deep.

Five bullet holes pierced a metal wall on a tower across the street from the row of conference buildings that straddle the MDL. A tree also was hit.

McShane said the bullets reached as far as about 200 yards south of the border line and struck windows in a nearby building.

He also said the wounded soldier initially was hard to find because he was not immediately visible on the closed-circuit television footage used to monitor the area and did not respond to calls from the UNC security battalion that had initiated a search.

A thermal imaging camera finally captured his heat signature, allowing two South Korean soldiers to crawl to him to drag him to safety.

Defense Minister Song Young-moo noted that much of the gunfire came from automatic rifles, which was a breach of the armistice that ended the fighting in 1953 but left the two countries technically in a state of war.

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Female Army recruits strive to make grade

Associated Press

FORT BENNING, Ga. — The young Army infantry recruits lined up in full combat gear, guns at the ready. At the signal, a soldier in front kicked in the door and they burst into the room, swiveling to check around the walls for threats.

"You're dead!" one would-be enemy yelled out from a dark corner, the voice slightly higher than the others echoing through the building.

It was 18-year-old Kirsten, training to become one of the Army's first women serving as infantry soldiers.

"I want to be one of the females to prove to everybody else that just because you're a female doesn't mean you can't do the same things as a male," she said, describing her brother — an infantry soldier — as motivation. "I also wanted to one-up him."

Kirsten is among more than 80 women who have gone to recruit training at Fort Benning, Ga., since a ban on them serving in combat jobs was lifted. Twenty-two have graduated. More than 30 were still in training late last month, working toward graduation.

The recruits' last names are being withheld by The Associat-

ed Press because some women have faced bullying on social media.

Somewhat smaller in stature than some of her male comrades, Kirsten gave up a Division I soccer scholarship to become an infantry soldier. In body armor, helmet and rucksack, she looks like just any other grunt.

A bunkmate, Gabriella, said the women push each other.

"Today during our ruck march, we were, like, directly across from each other and I would constantly look over at her," Gabriella said of Kirsten. "We kinda just kept looking at each other and we're like, all right, we're both doing it; we're passing these guys and stuff. We definitely have goals to be better than the guys."

The Army's introduction of women into the infantry has moved steadily but cautiously this year. As home to the previously all-male infantry and armor schools, Fort Benning had to make \$35 million in renovations, including female dorm rooms, security cameras and monitoring stations.

Laundry was an early challenge. For years, the men washed clothes any time at night. Now, there are alarms and schedules. A "female" sign

goes on the door when needed.

The women also balked at the early plan to put their living quarters on a separate floor from their squadmates. So base leaders now use one of four main sleeping bays to house the women. Cameras keep constant watch on the bay door and the stairs, and there's always a woman at the monitoring station.

"There's nothing they dislike more than to be separated," said Col. Kelly Kendrick, the brigade commander. He said the women just want to "fit in and do the same as everybody else."

This is the third class of recruits at Benning to include women. When they're not sleeping or washing clothes, they're completely integrated into their units.

As the sun peeked over the horizon on an October morning, dozens of infantry recruits spread across the Fort Benning field going through their morning physical training drills. In the dark mist, it was difficult to tell one from another as they powered through situps and pushups.

On that day, only two of five battalions training were integrated. There still aren't enough women to spread across all the

units.

The shortcoming has created challenges. In the last class, only four women graduated, so filling rotations for guard duty all night was a problem. There weren't enough women to cover every hour, so others had to fill in.

As women drop out, those remaining are moved to new companies to maintain balance within units, said Lt. Col. Sam Edwards, commander of 1st Battalion, 19th Infantry regiment. More than 36 percent of Benning's women have left — about twice the rate of men. Injuries have sidelined other women who plan to restart the training.

Army leaders are closely watching the integration to track injury and performance trends and ensure there are no problems.

"It was a boys' club for a long time," Kendrick said. "You have to be professional."

Recruits seem unfazed.

"They don't know any different. They don't notice they're integrated," Edwards said. Most just left high school, where boys and girls mingled all the time. "That's the way it's always been."

Security boosted at German Christmas markets

BY MARCUS KLOECKNER

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Security has been boosted at Germany's famed Christmas markets, including in cities with large populations of U.S. military personnel and their families.

The efforts come in the wake of attacks by Islamic State sympathizers and other extremists in various cities in Europe this year. Focus on security at Christmas markets sharpened in 2016 following an attack in Berlin that left 12 people dead.

Video surveillance, in-

creased police presence and other measures will be in place for the downtown market in Kaiserslautern, city police spokeswoman Christiane Lautenschlaeger said Monday. About 50,000 U.S. personnel and their families live in the area, making it the largest overseas U.S. military community.

The market, which includes food, crafts and entertainment, opened Monday and will continue through Dec. 23.

Security will focus on preventing both terrorism attacks and petty crimes, such as pickpocketing, Lautenschlaeger

said. Police also will check drivers in the area for alcohol impairment, she said.

U.S. military police will patrol alongside their German counterparts, an Air Force spokeswoman said. In Stuttgart, home to U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command, a large Christmas market will operate on several city streets from Wednesday to Dec. 23. Major streets leading to the market will be blocked, police spokesman Jens Lauer said.

"There will be an increased number of police officers at the Christmas market as well as in

the city's center," Lauer said.

Stuttgart already has held multiple festivals this year where it has used roadblocks and police armed with machine guns for protection, Lauer said.

Wiesbaden, home of U.S. Army Europe headquarters, will follow similar procedures at its market, which runs from Tuesday to Dec. 23. There is no such thing as total protection from a terrorist attack, "but we do our best to prevent it from happening," Wiesbaden police spokesman Markus Hoffmann said.

Extremists go Hollywood to recruit heroes

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Beyond the slick, Hollywood-style cinematics, Islamic State is targeting Western recruits with videos suggesting they, too, can be heroes like Bruce Willis' character in "Die Hard."

That's the conclusion of The Chicago Project on Security and Threats, which analyzed some 1,400 videos released by ISIS between 2013 and 2016. Researchers who watched and catalogued them all said there is more to the recruitment effort than just sophisticated videography, and it's not necessarily all about Islam.

Instead, Robert Pape, who directs the security center, said the extremist group is targeting Westerners — especially recent Muslim converts — with videos that follow, nearly step-by-step, a screenwriter's standard blueprint for heroic storytelling.

"It's the heroic screenplay journey, the same thing that's in 'Wonder Woman,' where you have someone who is learning his or her own powers through the course of their reluctant journey to be hero," Pape said.

The project at the University of Chicago separately has assembled a database of people who have been indicted in the U.S. for activities related to ISIS. Thirty-six percent were recent converts to Islam and did not come from established Muslim communities, according to the project. Eighty-three percent watched ISIS videos, the project said.

The group's success in using heroic storytelling is prompting copycats, Pape said. The research shows al-Qaida's Syria affiliate has been mimicking ISIS' heroic-

narrative approach in its own recruitment films. "We have a pattern that's emerging," Pape said.

Intelligence and law enforcement officials aren't sure the approach is all that new. They say ISIS has been using any method that works to recruit Westerners. Other terrorism researchers think ISIS' message is still firmly rooted in religious extremism.

Rita Katz, director of SITE Intelligence Group, which tracks messaging by militant groups, agrees that ISIS makes strong, visual appeals resembling Hollywood movies and video games, making its media operation more successful than al-Qaida's. And ISIS videos can attract hero wannabes, she said.

"However, these features of ISIS media are only assets to a core message it uses to recruit," Katz said. "At the foundation of ISIS recruitment propaganda is not so much the promise to be a Hollywood-esque hero, but a religious hero. There is a big difference between the two."

When a fighter sits in front of a camera and calls for attacks, Katz said, he likely will frame it as revenge for Muslims killed or oppressed somewhere in the world. The message is designed to depict any terrorist attack in that nation as justified and to allow the attacker to die as a martyr, she said.

The promise of religious martyrdom is powerful to anybody regardless of whether they are rich or poor, happy or unhappy, steeped in religion or not at all, she said.

Pape said he knows he's challenging conventional wisdom in saying Westerners are being coaxed to join ISIS ranks not be-

cause of religious beliefs, but because of the group's message of personal empowerment and Western concepts of individualism.

How else can one explain Western attackers' loose connections to Islam, or their scarce knowledge of ISIS' strict, conservative Sharia law, he asked. ISIS is embracing, not rejecting, Western culture and ideals to mobilize Americans, he said.

"This is a journey like Clint Eastwood," Pape said, recalling Eastwood's 1970s performance in "High Plains Drifter" about a stranger who doles out justice in a corrupt mining town. "When Clint Eastwood goes in to save the town, he's not doing it because he loves them. He even has contempt for the people he's saving. He's saving it because he's superior," Pape said.

"That's Bruce Willis in 'Die Hard.' That's Wonder Woman. ... Hollywood has figured out that's what puts hundreds of millions in theater seats," Pape said. "ISIS has figured out that's how to get Westerners."

Matthew Levitt, a terrorism expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said it doesn't surprise him that ISIS would capitalize on what he dubs the "zero to hero" strategy because the organization is very pragmatic and accepts recruits regardless of their commitment to Islamic extremism.

Heroic aspirations are only one reason for joining the ranks of ISIS, he said. Criminals also seek the cover of ISIS to commit crimes. Others sign up because they want to belong to something.

"I've never seen a case of radicalization that was 100 percent one way or the other," Levitt said.

US: Syria poses threat to ban on chemical weapons

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — The U.S. warned Monday that efforts to uphold the global ban on the production and use of chemical weapons are at a "critical juncture" in the wake of their use during Syria's civil war.

As the Syrian government and its allies seek to discredit conclusions by international investigators that Damascus has used such weapons repeatedly, Andrea Hall, of the U.S. National Security Council, said the ban on chemical weapons, such as nerve agents and poison gas, is now under threat.

"We must take every opportunity to deter states from using chemical weapons," Hall said. "If we fail to take action now, nonstate actors use will also rise."

Hall was speaking on the opening day

of the annual conference of state parties to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which won the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize for overseeing the global ban on chemical weapons.

"Chemical weapons use by the Syrian Arab Republic remains the most serious violation of the CWC in the convention's 20-year history and the greatest modern challenge to the global norm against chemical weapons use," Hall told delegates in The Hague.

A joint investigation team made up of OPCW and U.N. experts has concluded that the Syrian government used chlorine gas in at least two attacks in 2014 and 2015 and used the nerve agent sarin in an aerial attack on Khan Sheikhoun April 4 that killed about 100 people and affected about 200 others.

The team also accused Islamic State of using mustard gas in 2015 and again in September 2016 in Um Hosh in Aleppo.

Russia, Syria's staunch ally, recently vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution that would have extended the mandate of the U.N.-OPCW Joint Investigative Mission. That mandate expired earlier this month.

Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad branded the investigation unprofessional and biased.

"So we are always seeing politicized reports, false conclusions aiming to bring even more pressure to bear on Syria," he said.

British Ambassador Peter Wilson echoed U.S. concerns, saying that the chemical weapons convention "is under unprecedented attack."

Trump signals openness to tax plan changes

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Monday that changes to the Republican tax bill are coming as he looks to win over holdout GOP senators in an effort to pass the package by the end of the year.

In a morning tweet, he said, “With just a few changes, some mathematical, the middle class and job producers can get even more in actual dollars and savings.”

Trump is suggesting openness to making unspecified changes to the way millions of “pass-through” businesses are

taxed, a sticking point for some lawmakers.

Trump and Republicans have set as a vital political goal passage of tax overhaul legislation by the end of the year. The House recently passed a \$1.5 trillion bill. Senate GOP leaders hope to muscle their bill through this week. The package blends a sharp reduction in top corporate and business tax rates with more modest relief for individuals.

Trump was set to meet Monday afternoon with five members of the Senate Finance Committee who are on board with the GOP plan. He will trav-

el to Capitol Hill on Tuesday to lobby Republican senators.

In a boost for GOP efforts, Republican Sen. Rand Paul, of Kentucky, said he would back the measure.

“I’m not getting everything I want — far from it. But I’ve been immersed in this process. I’ve fought for and received major changes for the better — and I plan to vote for this bill as it stands right now,” Paul wrote in an op-ed on Fox News.

Republicans have no votes to spare in the Senate, where they hold a razor-thin 52-48 edge.

Holdouts include Republican Sen. Susan Collins, of Maine,

who has objected to a provision in the Senate bill repealing the requirement under the “Obamacare” program that everyone have health insurance. Collins has said that issue should be dealt with separately from the effort to overhaul the tax code.

Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., has already declared his opposition to the bill, saying it doesn’t cut business taxes enough for partnerships and corporations. GOP Sens. Bob Corker, of Tennessee, and John McCain and Jeff Flake, of Arizona, also have concerns about the bill and its impact on the nation’s deficit.

Black Friday sets record for gun background checks

The Washington Post

For decades, the term “Black Friday” has conjured up distinct images: turkey-stuffed consumers awake at insanely early hours of the morning, bursting into big-box stores to fight over flat-screen TVs.

But in a muzzle flash, it seems, a new image may be replacing that stereotype. It involves a trigger and, possibly, a scope. On Friday, the FBI received 203,086 requests for instant gun background checks, according to USA Today — a new record for background checks in a single day.

That’s not an anomaly. According to the FBI, the previous two records for background checks were also set on the day after the federal holiday in which Americans give thanks for the year’s blessings.

The FBI didn’t provide any analysis behind the spike, but the biggest shopping day of the year may come at a moment of worry for people who fear someone from the government may knock on their door someday and confiscate their guns.

On Wednesday, Attorney General Jeff Sessions directed the FBI and ATF to look at potential problems in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. Sessions wants

the agencies to fix problems with how the military and other federal entities report convictions that could keep someone from having a gun.

The directive comes after the U.S. Air Force conceded it had never submitted the domestic-abuse conviction of Devin P. Kelley to the NICS database. Kelley purchased a Ruger AR-556 rifle with a 30-round magazine and used it to mow down a church full of parishioners in Sutherland Springs, Texas, earlier this month.

A month before that, a man using a “bump stock” to make his rifles fire at a much faster rate killed 58 people and injured hundreds more in Las Vegas. The Las Vegas sheriff said Stephen Paddock fired more than 1,100 rounds, according to The Associated Press. Investigators found 4,000 unused rounds in his hotel suite.

Gun safety advocates routinely push for greater restrictions on gun purchases after such shootings. And gun rights advocates routinely take equally strong stances on the other side of the issue. But this year, one mass shooting was different. Even the NRA said there should be additional regulations on devices like Paddock’s bump stocks.

Role in nuclear project could complicate Flynn’s legal issues

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — In June 2015, retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn took a little-noticed trip to Egypt and Israel, paid for by a U.S. company he was advising. The company hoped to build more than two dozen nuclear plants in the region in partnership with Russian interests.

Flynn’s quiet involvement in that project — and his failure to disclose his ties to the effort — could complicate the legal issues facing President Donald Trump’s former national security adviser, who has signaled he may be willing to cooperate with special counsel Robert Mueller.

Congressional Democrats say Flynn may have violated federal law by failing to disclose the Middle Eastern trip in his security clearance renewal application in 2016. A top House Republican declined the Democrats’ request for a congressional inquiry but referred the allegations to the special counsel.

Last month, Mueller revealed that his wide-ranging investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election has led to charges against three former Trump campaign officials. One of them, foreign policy adviser

George Papadopoulos, has been cooperating, according to court filings.

There are now signs that Flynn — whose international dealings have been the subject of intense interest by the special counsel — also may be willing to share information with prosecutors. Last week, his attorney shut down communications with Trump’s legal team, a development many interpreted as suggesting possible cooperation with Mueller.

Investigators for the special counsel have been examining whether Flynn hid foreign business dealings, particularly work he did for Turkish interests during the campaign, according to people familiar with the probe.

The nuclear venture is yet another instance in which Flynn appeared to have a personal stake in an international project while he was advising Trump in 2016, giving prosecutors one more potential avenue to pressure him to cooperate.

Flynn remained involved in the Middle Eastern nuclear project from the spring of 2015 to the end of 2016, according to recent financial disclosure filings, a period that partially overlapped with his role as a prominent adviser to Trump’s campaign and transition.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Child, 8, steering car hurt when it crashes

NY WHITEHALL — Authorities said an 8-year-old child was hospitalized with serious injuries after a car crashed as the child steered the vehicle while sitting on a New York man's lap.

State police said Brett Reynolds, 36, of Whitehall, took his mother's car on Nov. 21 and allowed the child to steer while Reynolds worked the pedals.

Troopers said the child suffered a fractured arm and rib, a punctured lung and head injuries when the car hit an embankment and then a tree.

Police said Reynolds left the child crying outside of a home before fleeing the scene. Troopers aren't releasing the child's relationship to Reynolds.

Reynolds was arrested the next day at a hospital where he was being treated. He's being held in jail without bail.

Killer: Rights violated when dreadlocks cut

OH COLUMBUS — A convicted killer in an Ohio prison claims in a federal lawsuit that his civil rights have been violated by the repeated cutting of his dreadlocks.

The lawsuit filed on behalf of inmate Cecil Koger says his faith of Rastafarianism requires him to wear his hair in dreadlocks.

The lawsuit filed earlier this month says the prison has cut his hair forcibly five times, impeding his ability to practice his religion.

The lawsuit says Ohio's prison system has allowed dreadlocks for other inmates and seeks to force the prison system to recognize Rastafarianism as a religion. A message was left with

the Ohio prisons system seeking comment.

Koger, 35, is serving a 33-year sentence for aggravated murder and aggravated robbery.

Police: Thinking it's a deer, man shoots truck

NY NORTH HARMONY — Authorities said an Ohio man shot a pickup he mistook for a deer in western New York.

The shooting Friday was the second hunting accident in Chautauqua County in three days. Police said Rosemary Biliquist, 43, was shot and killed Wednesday by a man who thought she was a deer.

The Post-Journal of Jamestown reported that Friday's incident happened about 11:30 a.m. in North Harmony. Sheriff's deputies said Marvin Miller, of Middlefield, Ohio, fired a high-powered rifle at a pickup.

They said Miller told authorities he had mistaken the truck for a deer.

Miller was arrested on charges including reckless endangerment.

Human skull discovered during traffic stop

CA ANGELS CAMP — Police said they arrested a California man on Thanksgiving after a human skull was found in the trunk of a car that ran a stop sign.

Officers in Angels Camp said it appears the skull had been dug up recently. It was taken to the Calaveras County coroner's office for identification.

Police said a passenger seen driving the car earlier did not have a valid driver's license. The skull was found during a search before the car was towed.

Police also reported finding methamphetamine hidden behind the car's fuel door.

Officers said the man refused to say how he got the skull and was booked on suspicion of disturbing human remains, possessing methamphetamine and vehicle code violations.

Deputy reassigned after appearing in blackface

VA POQUOSON — A white Virginia sheriff's deputy has been reassigned after attending a Halloween party in blackface.

The Washington Post reported Deputy Jean Browning, a 20-year veteran of the York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office in southeastern Virginia, attended a party dressed as U.S. Rep. Frederica Wilson. She was accompanied by her boyfriend, who was dressed as President Donald Trump.

Trump publicly feuded with the Florida congresswoman last month after she criticized comments he made to the widow of a soldier killed in Niger.

Browning was an anti-drug officer in the local school system.

Man killed chasing dog on interstate

CO FORT COLLINS — A man from Tennessee is dead after chasing after a dog that ran onto Interstate 25 in northern Colorado.

The Colorado State Patrol said the 39-year-old man was riding in a pickup with a woman the evening of Nov. 19 when they had a dispute and she pulled over on the interstate in Fort Collins.

The Fort Collins Coloradoan reported the dog jumped out and the man ran after it. A Walmart semitrailer hit and killed both the man and the

dog.

The 37-year-old female driver was taken to the hospital.

City gives \$45K to group aiding homeless

MS TUPELO — A Mississippi city is contributing to a private group that is trying to end homelessness.

The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal reported the Tupelo City Council voted to give \$45,000 to Mississippi United to End Homelessness.

The group focuses on moving people off the streets into permanent, stable housing. Organizers said the group found homes for 27 people in Tupelo from February until early November.

1 dead, 11 injured in car-surfing accident

OK PICHER — One man died and 11 others were injured when a Jeep Cherokee with three people car surfing on the roof swerved off an Oklahoma road and crashed.

The Oklahoma Highway Patrol said Bryan Mitchel McGuirk, 27, of Miami, Okla., died Saturday evening in Tulsa of injuries sustained in the accident Friday. He was riding on the roof and was thrown 20 feet.

Also on the roof were Adrian Diane Ellison, 27, and Brandon Carter, 20, both from Columbus, Kan. Ellison was thrown 100 feet and is hospitalized in fair condition. Carter was treated and released.

The trooper's report says there were nine others in the vehicle. The vehicle swerved off a gravel road into a ditch, grazed a tree and struck another tree before landing on its top.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

NFL roundup

Late FG lifts Steelers over Packers

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Chris Boswell kicked a career-long 53-yard field goal as time expired to give the Pittsburgh Steelers a 31-28 victory over the Green Bay Packers on Sunday night.

The Steelers (9-2) won their sixth straight thanks in large part to wide receiver Antonio Brown. Brown caught 10 passes for 169 yards and two scores and also made a pair of catches on the deciding drive, including a 23-yard grab on the sideline that put the Steelers into Green Bay territory.

Brown added a 14-yard reception on the next play. Two snaps, later Boswell drilled the winner and his teammates mobbed him at midfield.

Ben Roethlisberger threw for 351 yards with four touchdowns and two interceptions. Le'Veon Bell ran for 95 yards and added another 88 yards receiving.

Brett Hundley completed 17 of 26 for 245 yards and three touchdowns for Green Bay (5-6) in his best start since taking over for injured Aaron Rodgers. Jamaal William ran for 66 yards, including a 4-yard leap into the end zone with 2:02 that tied it at 28.

The teams traded punts before Pittsburgh took over at its 30 with 17 seconds to go. It was just enough time for Roethlisberger and Brown to push the Steelers within the fringe of Boswell's range as Pittsburgh kept pace with New England for the AFC's best record.

Rams 26, Saints 20: Jared Goff passed for 354 yards and hit Sammy Watkins and rookie Josh Reynolds for touchdowns, and host Los Angeles snapped the New Orleans Saints' eight-game winning streak with a victory on Sunday in a meeting of NFC division leaders.

NFL scoring leader Greg Zuerlein kicked four field goals for the Rams (8-3), who earned their fifth victory in six games.

Eagles 31, Bears 3: Carson Wentz tossed three touchdown passes and NFL-leading Philadelphia beat visiting Chicago for its ninth straight win.

The Eagles (10-1) reduced their magic number to clinch the NFC East to one with their fourth consecutive win by at least 23 points and third in a row by exactly 28. Philadelphia would secure its first division title since 2013 if the Cowboys (5-6) lose or tie Washington on Thursday night.

Raiders 21, Broncos 14: Derek Carr threw two touchdown passes after losing starting receiver Michael Crabtree to an ejection for his role in a brawl, and host Oakland spoiled Paxton Lynch's first start

of the season.

The Raiders ended the longest season-opening interception drought in NFL history. With the Broncos at the 1, Lynch looked for tight end Virgil Green in the end zone. The ball bounced off Green and Raiders safety Reggie Nelson before landing in NaVorro Bowman's arms as he was lying on the turf.

Patriots 35, Dolphins 17: Tom Brady tossed four touchdown passes — including two to Rob Gronkowski — and host New England pushed through injuries and a mistake-filled game.

New England (9-2) posted its seventh consecutive victory and third straight win over Miami.

It was Brady's 28th career game with four or more touchdown passes, ranking third all-time. His 26 touchdowns passes are the most in a season after turning 40 years old.

Falcons 34, Buccaneers 20: At Atlanta, Julio Jones hauled in 12 passes for 253 yards and two touchdowns in one of the best games of his career.

Rekindling memories of the Super Bowl, the Falcons (7-4) nearly squandered a big lead to a team playing its third game without injured quarterback Jameis Winston. The Buccaneers (4-7) rebounded from a 27-6 deficit behind backup Ryan Fitzpatrick and drove deep into Atlanta territory after forcing a fumble at the other end of the field.

But Keanu Neal battled down Fitzpatrick's pass on fourth-and-1 at the Atlanta 18 with just over seven minutes remaining, and the Falcons drove for a clinching touchdown on Tevin Coleman's 14-yard run with just under two minutes to go.

Bengals 30, Browns 16: Rookie Joe Mixon ran for a career-high 114 yards in host Cincinnati's best offensive showing since the last time it faced Cleveland.

The result sent the Browns into December still winless for the second year in a row.

The Bengals (5-6) won back-to-back games for the second time this season. They hadn't scored so many points since they won 31-7 at Cleveland on Oct. 1.

Cardinals 27, Jaguars 24: Phil Dawson kicked a career-long 57-yard field goal with 1 second to play, snapping visiting Jacksonville's four-game winning streak and dropping them into a tie with Tennessee for the AFC South lead.

The 42-year-old kicker, who had uncharacteristically missed six field goals this season, also was good from 34 and 42 yards as the Cardinals (5-6) beat a team with a win-

ning record for the first time this season.

Seahawks 24, 49ers 13: At Santa Clara, Calif., Russell Wilson threw for two touchdowns to give him 150 career TDs passing and also ran for a short score.

Wilson connected on a 17-yard touchdown pass to Nick Vannett in the third quarter, and a 1-yarder early in the fourth to Jimmy Graham, whose 16 TD receptions passed Jerramy Stevens for most by a Seattle tight end.

Jimmy Garoppolo made his 49ers debut with 1:07 remaining after starting quarterback C.J. Beathard went down on a hit by Michael Bennett as he threw a pass. Garoppolo — acquired from New England at the trade deadline last month and hoped by the 49ers (1-10) to stay on the shelf a little longer — immediately scrambled to gain 4 yards and found Louis Murphy for a 10-yard touchdown as time expired.

Wilson completed 20 of 34 passes for 228 yards and moved past Joe Flacco to become the winningest quarterback in his first six seasons with 63 victories.

Bills 16, Chiefs 10: Tyrod Taylor threw for 183 yards and a touchdown in his return to the starting lineup and Tre'Davious White intercepted Alex Smith with just over a minute remaining to clinch it in Kansas City.

Zay Jones had the touchdown reception and Stephen Hauschka kicked three field goals for the Bills (6-5), but the story was their defense — or the Chiefs' complete lack of offense.

Panthers 35, Jets 27: Luke Kuechly returned a fumble 34 yards for a touchdown and Kaelin Clay had a 60-yard punt return for a score, capping a stunning swing in the fourth quarter that lifted visiting Carolina.

It was the fourth straight victory for the Panthers (8-3), who were trying to keep pace with the first-place Saints in the NFC South. The teams meet next Sunday at New Orleans.

This one turned in a span of 2 minutes, 11 seconds on mistakes by the Jets (4-7) — and the Panthers taking advantage.

Titans 20, Colts 16: The Titans got their first win in 10 tries at Lucas Oil Stadium when DeMarco Murray scored on a 1-yard touchdown run with 5:59 left.

The Titans (7-4) pulled off their first series sweep since 2002. And they did it by rallying from a 10-point third-quarter deficit again — just as they had six weeks earlier against the Colts.

Indy (3-8) has lost three straight home games and five of its last six overall. It is one loss away from having the first losing year in coach Chuck Pagano's six seasons.

Kentucky's Calipari reaches 700 wins

Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Kentucky coach John Calipari reached a milestone when the Wildcats played their best game of the season.

Kevin Knox scored a career-high 25 points to lead No. 8 Kentucky to a 107-73 victory over the University of Illinois-Chicago on Sunday night to conclude play in the Adolph Rupp Classic.

The win gave Calipari his 700th career victory, three years after he notched his 600th. This squad, his ninth at Kentucky (6-1), starts an all-freshman cast and struggled in wins over Utah Valley State and Vermont before finally putting together a complete effort against the Flames.

"I feel we are getting better," Calipari said. "We're trend-

ing the right way and now we have to sustain it. ... This was the closest to a 40-minute basketball game (we have played) this year."

Knox led seven Kentucky players in double figures in one of the team's best offensive showings of the season. Hamidou Diallo had a career-best 19 points, PJ Washington added 17 and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 14.

Knox got most of his scoring in the post and missed just four attempts, all from long range. Knox said improving his inside game has been a point of emphasis in practice during the Thanksgiving break.

"That's something we worked in practice prior to this game," he said. "They really couldn't guard us in the post and that's something we took advantage of."

More than a month into his first season with the Wildcats, Knox is getting more adjusted to the team's offensive scheme.

"I'm starting to feel more comfortable with my teammates and we're all kind of clicking," he said. "This was one of our best games of the season and we all just clicked. We were all making shots and played together as a team and we're starting to figure everyone out."

The Wildcats scored a season-high 52 points in the first half, paced by Knox's 15. Diallo added 11, including a thunderous one-handed slam dunk. Gilgeous-Alexander came off the bench for 10 points.

Knox, Gilgeous-Alexander and Diallo combined for 14 of Kentucky's 20 field goals in the first half.

The takeaway

UIC: The Flames fell to 3-6 against Southeastern Conference opponents. UIC owns wins over Texas A&M (2001), Mississippi (2005) and Vanderbilt (2008). Flames guard Dominique Matthews is the younger brother of former Kentucky guard Charles Matthews, a sophomore at the University of Michigan. UIC collected six blocks against the Wildcats, including three by Tai Odiase.

Kentucky: Knox, Diallo, Richards and Washington have started all seven games this season. Richards had 25 points and 15 rebounds in an 86-67 victory over Fort Wayne on Thursday. Quade Green, Diallo, Richards, Knox and Washington started against the Flames.

Top 25 roundup

Duke, Michigan State win PK80 title games

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Marvin Bagley III had 30 points and 15 rebounds, and No. 1 Duke rallied late to beat No. 7 Florida 87-84 on Sunday night for the Motion Bracket championship at the Phil Knight Invitational tournament.

Gary Trent Jr., who had a pair of free throws that pulled the Blue Devils in front and a key steal in the final moments, finished with 15 points.

Bagley, a 6-foot-11 freshman, has six double-doubles in eight games this season for Duke (8-0). He was named the bracket's Most Valuable Player.

KeVaughn Allen had 17 points for Florida (5-1). Jalen Hudson added 24 points and 10 rebounds.

No. 4 Michigan State 63, No. 9 North Carolina 45: Joshua Lanford made five three-pointers and scored 23 points and the Spartans beat the Tar Heels to win the Victory Bracket of the PK80 Invitational.

Tom Izzo got the best of Roy Williams for the first time since Williams arrived in Chapel Hill, thanks to a dominating performance at the defensive end. Michigan State bullied UNC on the interior at both ends of the floor and got just enough offense.

The Tar Heels shot just 24.6 percent, the worst-shooting game in North Carolina history. North Carolina was 1-for-18 on three-point attempts, also the worst in school history.

Williams had won all seven previous matchups between the Tar Heels and Izzo's Spartans. Theo Pinson led North Carolina (5-1) with 16 points.

No. 16 Texas A&M 75, No. 10 Southern California 59: D.J. Hogg scored 15 points and the Aggies pulled away with a 19-3 run in the second half to beat the Trojans in the first matchup of ranked opponents at Galen Center since 2007.

Duane Wilson added 13 points and Tyler Davis had 10 for the Aggies (7-0), who tied their best start under coach Billy Kennedy. Chimezie Metu scored 13 points for the Trojans (4-1). Their 21-game home non-conference winning streak was snapped.

No. 17 Gonzaga 76, Texas 71 (OT): At Portland, Ore., Rui Hachimura came off the bench to score a career-high 20 points, Josh Perkins added 15 and the Bulldogs blew a 21-point second half lead before putting away the Longhorns in overtime in a consolation game at the PK80 Invitational.

Andrew Jones hit a three-pointer in the closing seconds of regulation to force OT,

capping the Longhorns' unexpected rally. But Texas (4-2) had three turnovers in overtime, the last of which Silas Melson picked off, leading to a transition layup with 10 seconds left that finally put away the Longhorns.

Georgia 83, No. 21 Saint Mary's 81 (OT): At Fullerton, Calif., reserve guard Tyree Crump scored five of his 17 points in overtime and the Bulldogs beat the Gaels in the third-place game of the Wooden Legacy tournament.

No. 23 UCLA 87, UC Irvine 63: Prince Ali scored 16 of his career-high 21 points in the first half for the Bruins.

Ali earned the start in place of the injured Jaylen Hands, who sprained his left foot sprain in UCLA's victory over Wisconsin. Ali helped the Bruins (5-1) improve to 3-0 at Pauley Pavilion.

No. 23 West Virginia 83, Missouri 79: At Lake Buena Vista, Fla., Jevon Carter scored 29 points, including a go-ahead three-pointer in the final minute, and West Virginia overcame a 16-point second-half deficit to beat Missouri 83-79 in the Advocare Invitational championship game.

Daxter Miles Jr. added 26 points, including four late free throws, for West Virginia (6-1).

NBA roundup

Heat knock off Bulls

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Goran Dragic and the Miami Heat followed the lowest-scoring first quarter in team history with the highest-scoring one of the season to beat the Chicago Bulls.

After scoring seven points in the first quarter, Miami had 38 in the second to take a 45-42 lead en route to a 100-93 victory Sunday.

Dragic scored 24 points, Wayne Ellington had 19 points and five 3-pointers off the bench and the Heat's four reserves outscored their five starters. James Johnson added 15 points, seven rebounds and six assists, and fellow reserves Tyler Johnson and Kelly Olynyk scored 10 points apiece as the Heat bench produced 54 points to extend the team's winning streak to three.

Jerian Grant led Chicago with a career-high 24 points. Denzel Valentine had 14 points

and career highs of 13 rebounds and seven assists.

Timberwolves 119, Suns 108: Karl-Anthony Towns had 32 points and 12 rebounds and host Minnesota beat Phoenix, taking advantage of high-scoring Suns guard Devin Booker's absence.

The Suns announced shortly before the game that Booker — who scored 35 points in Phoenix's home victory over Minnesota on Nov. 11 — would sit out because of an injured big right toe.

Nets 98, Grizzlies 88: DeMarre Carroll scored a season-high 24 points, Trevor Booker added 16 points and 11 rebounds, and visiting Brooklyn beat Memphis to snap a three-game losing streak.

Joe Harris added 13 points for the Nets. Marc Gasol and Tyreke Evans scored 18 points apiece for Memphis. The Grizzlies have lost eight straight.

NHL roundup

Vesey leads Rangers to win

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jimmy Vesey scored the tying goal early in the third period and added the winner in the seventh round of a shootout to give the New York Rangers a 4-3 victory over the Vancouver Canucks on Sunday.

Henrik Lundqvist made 29 saves to help the Rangers extend their winning streak to four.

Vesey tied it at 5:05 of the third with a nifty forehand-backhand combination for his fifth goal of the season. Rick Nash set up the goal with a spinning pass.

Jesper Fast and Michael Grabner also scored for New York. Loui Eriksson, Jake Virtanen and Sam Gagner scored for Vancouver.

Grabner tied it 19 seconds into the third with his 10th goal of the season, beating Mark-

strom with a wrist shot. Gagner put the Canucks back in front 41 second later. Tomas Vanek forced a turnover behind the net and fed Gagner in the slot.

Oilers 4, Bruins 2: Ryan Strome broke a tie early in the third period and Cam Talbot made 23 saves in visiting Edmonton's win over Boston.

The Oilers beat the Bruins for the sixth straight time after dropping the previous 13.

Hurricanes 4, Predators 3 (SO): Sebastian Aho and Teuvo Teravainen scored in the shootout to lift host Carolina past Nashville.

Aho beat Juuse Saros with a wrist shot over his blocker on Carolina's second attempt. After Scott Darling stopped Filip Forsberg's second attempt for Nashville, Teravainen lifted a backhand over Saros' left shoulder for the winner.

Briefly

Gators hire Mullen as new head coach

Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — New Florida coach Dan Mullen poked his head out of the jet door and flashed a huge smile.

A few minutes later, he told reporters: "I'm fired up. I'm excited."

The Gators hired Mullen as their head coach Sunday, bringing back the team's most successful offensive coordinator since Steve Spurrier's heyday. Mullen is scheduled to be formally introduced Monday.

Mullen, his wife and two children arrived in Gainesville around 11 a.m. Mullen wore his 2008 national championship ring and showed off the shimmering, diamond-covered piece to anyone who wanted a look. He even offered to grab his 2006 title ring out of his bag.

The 45-year-old Mullen spent the last 13 years in the Southeastern Conference, cultivating offenses, developing quarterbacks and turning Mississippi State into a title contender. He won two titles during his four years (2005-08) at Florida.

The Gators hope he can do the same in his return.

In other college football news:

■ No. 10 TCU will be without senior safety Nick Orr for the first half of the Big 12 championship game after the conference suspended him for his role in a bench-clearing brawl against Baylor.

After reviewing video of the skirmish that occurred during TCU's 45-22 victory Friday, the Big 12 announced penalties on Sunday against Orr and Baylor players JaMaycal Hasty and D.J. Artis.

League officials determined the players had committed flagrant personal fouls for punching opposing players. Artis was also seen kicking at TCU players.

Orr will sit out the first half

Saturday against No. 2 Oklahoma in the Big 12 championship game. Hasty will be suspended for the first half of Baylor's conference opener against Kansas next season, and Artis will have to sit out that entire game.

Toronto rallies to beat Calgary in Grey Cup

OTTAWA, Ontario — Lirim Hajrullahu kicked a 32-yard field goal with 49 seconds left and the Toronto Argonauts stunned the Calgary Stampeders 27-24 on Sunday in the Canadian Football League's snowy 105th Grey Cup.

Toronto tied it with 4:35 to go on Cassius Vaughn's Grey Cup-record 109-yard fumble return and Ricky Ray's 2-point conversion pass to Declan Cross.

After Hajrullahu's field goal, Matt Black picked off Bo Levi Mitchell's pass in the end zone to send the Stampeders to their second loss in two years in the title game. Last year, they fell to Ottawa 39-33 in overtime.

Toronto won its record-extending 17 championship, and the 38-year-old Ray became the first starting quarterback to win four Grey Cup titles.

France captures 10th Davis Cup title

LILLE, France — France won the Davis Cup for the first time in 16 years after beating Belgium 3-2 on Sunday.

Lucas Pouille's lopsided 6-3, 6-1, 6-0 win over Steve Darcis in the second reverse singles gave France its 10th Davis Cup title, ending a run of three losses in finals.

France joined Britain in third place on the list for the most Davis Cup titles, behind the United States (32) and Australia (28).

France had won its last title in 2001, and lost in finals in 2002, 2010 and 2014.